



Creating Opportunity in Higher Education

State Student Financial Aid Programs

Background

Washington State helps keep college affordable through state appropriations to public colleges and universities and direct aid to individual students. By paying more than 60 percent of the cost of public higher education, the state can reduce the amount of tuition charged to students. State financial aid to individual students falls into one of three categories:

- Assistance to needy students (State Need Grant, State Work Study, Educational Opportunity Grant);
- Rewarding merit (Washington Promise Scholarship, Washington Scholars); or
- Targeted assistance (Future Teacher and Health Professional Programs).

Nearly one-third of all Washington students – or about 100,000 people – receive some form of direct aid from all sources (federal, state, and other). The Higher Education Coordinating Board administers the following state-funded financial aid programs.

State Need Grant

State Need Grants help the state's lowest-income undergraduate students pursue degrees, hone their skills, or retrain for new careers. In 2000-2001, the program will use about \$85.9 million in state money, and \$907,000 in federal matching funds, to help about 54,000 students go to college. To be eligible, a student's family income cannot exceed 65 percent of the state's median family income, or about \$37,500 for a family of four.

In 1999-2000, the median family income for dependent students who received grants was about \$21,500. The median family income for self-supporting students was about \$9,000. The average State Need Grant is about \$1,500 per academic year.

State Work Study

Through part-time employment, students from low- and middle-income families earn money for college while gaining experience whenever possible in jobs related to their academic and career goals. Students must enroll in an accredited Washington public or independent four-year college or university or public community or technical college at either the undergraduate or graduate level. Students earn an average of \$2,300 annually.

In 2000-2001, about 9,500 students will earn about \$21 million, with \$15.3 million from the state and the rest from the employers' share of wages. The average family income for dependent students who received grants in 1999-2000 was about \$38,000. The average income for self-supporting students was about \$11,000.

Washington Promise Scholarship

The Washington Promise Scholarship provides college scholarships to students in recognition of their academic achievements in high school. Students must come from low- and middle-income families and either graduate in the top 15 percent of their classes or score at least 1,200 on the SAT on their first attempt. Family income cannot exceed 135 percent of the state's median family income, or about \$77,600 for a family of four.

More than 5,600 students are eligible to receive grants of up to \$1,542 in the 2000-2001 academic year, including about 3,450 students from the class of 2000. About 2,150 students from the class of 1999 will receive their second and final award. Students can use the grants at public two- and four-year colleges and universities and accredited private colleges and vocational schools in Washington State.

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917 Lakeridge Way SW
P.O. Box 43430
Olympia, WA 98504-3430
Phone: (360) 753-7800
Fax: (360) 753-7808
Email: info@hecb.wa.gov
www.hecb.wa.gov

Educational Opportunity Grant

This program provides \$2,500 grants to encourage financially-needy, “placebound” students to complete a bachelor’s degree. Students must be Washington residents, live in one of 13 counties, and have completed two years of college. To be considered placebound, students must be unable to continue their education due to family or work commitments, health concerns, financial need, or other similar factors, without the assistance of this grant. Students can use the grants at all eligible four-year colleges and universities in Washington, except the UW and WSU branch campuses. In 2000-2001, the program will use about \$2.9 million to help more than 1,000 students.

Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs

These programs were created to address the critical shortages of qualified health care professionals statewide. Participating health care professionals agree to provide primary health care service for three to five years in medically underserved areas or in areas that have experienced a shortage of health professionals. In exchange, they receive either a conditional scholarship or help in repaying school loans. Recipients do not have to be state residents to apply. In 2000, more than 180 health professionals worked in underserved areas in Washington State as a result of the programs.

Washington Scholars

This program honors the accomplishments of three high school students from each of the 49 state legislative districts. High school principals nominate the top one percent of the graduating senior class on the basis of academic achievement, leadership, and community service. Scholars receive state grants, equal to about four years of public undergraduate resident tuition. Grants can be used at any public or independent college or university in Washington.

Future Teachers

This program encourages classified employees in public K-12 schools to become teachers by offering conditional scholarships. In return for school loans of up to \$4,000 per year, employees agree to teach in Washington K-12 public schools. For every two years of teaching service, the state will forgive one year of the loan. For every one year of service in a geographic or subject area with a shortage of teachers, the state will forgive one year of the loan. In 2000-2001, the Board awarded conditional scholarships to 245 future teachers.

Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE)

Three vocational students from each of the 49 state legislative districts are recognized for outstanding achievement in vocational-technical education. High schools, skills centers, and community and technical colleges nominate students. Recipients receive grants equal to about two years of undergraduate resident tuition. Grants can be used at public two- and four-year colleges and universities and accredited private colleges and vocational schools in Washington State.

Community Scholarship Matching Grants

Community scholarship organizations that raise \$2,000 for student scholarships may apply for state matching grants of \$2,000. Organizations must be tax exempt and have 501(c)(3) federal tax code status. In 2000-2001, the state will offer matching grants to more than 180 organizations.

WICHE Student Exchange

Washington residents can enroll in eligible programs in 14 states through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) student exchange. The *Professional Student Exchange* provides state support to optometry and osteopathy students. Graduate students can enroll in masters and doctoral out-of-state programs and pay reduced tuition rates through the *Regional Graduate Exchange*. Undergraduate students can attend out-of-state programs and pay 150 percent of resident tuition, rather than out-of-state tuition, through the *Western Undergraduate Exchange*.

American Indian Endowed Scholarship

This program helps financially needy students, who have close social and cultural ties to a Native American community, pursue undergraduate and graduate studies at public and independent schools in Washington. Scholarship money comes from interest generated through an endowment funded by private contributors and the State. The program annually awards about 15 scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$1,500.